

Remarks:

The above amendments and these remarks are responsive to the final Office action dated May 3, 2006.

Prior to entry of this amendment claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 9-15, 20, 21 and 27-29 remained pending in the application. Claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 9-15 and 27-29 have been allowed. Claims 20 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Rodriguez, Jr. et al. (US 6,082,964) in view of Takada (US 2001/0046072).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Rodriguez, Jr. et al. (US 6,082,964) in view of Takada (US 2001/0046072). Nevertheless, in view of the finality of the May 3, 2006 Office Action, and in the interest of furthering prosecution of the present application to issuance of a patent, applicant has cancelled claims 20 and 21 without prejudice to further prosecution in this application or any other application.

Regarding the Examiner's Indication of reasons for allowing the claims, applicant agrees with the Examiner's conclusions regarding patentability of claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 9-15 and 27-29, without necessarily agreeing with or acquiescing in the Examiner's reasoning. In particular, applicant believes that the application is allowable because the prior art fails to teach, anticipate or render obvious the invention as claimed, independent of how the invention is paraphrased.

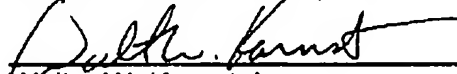
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Conclusion

Applicant believes that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to Examiner R. Blackman, Group Art Unit 2851, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, at facsimile number (571) 273-8300 on June 19, 2006.



Christie A. Doolittle

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AMENDMENT

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